

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 5166

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR UR PLO XF
SUBJECT: MORE ON ARAFAT VISIT TO MOSCOW

REF: MOSCOW 4805

SUMMARY: REPORTS BY MFA OFFICIALS INDICATE THAT FORM OF
PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION AT GENEVA CONFERENCE WAS ONE OF
MAJOR TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION DURING RECENT ARAFAT VISIT
TO MOSCOW. ALSO DISCUSSED WAS ZMODERATION" OF PALESTINIAN
MOVEMENT IN WAKE OF PALESTINE NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING
IN CAIRO. END SUMMARY

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1. DURING APRIL 4 POL COUNSELORS' MEETING ITALIAN
GAVE US READOUT OF ARAFAT VISIT BASED ON HIS RECENT
CALL ON MFA N.E. COUNTRIES DEPT COUNSELOR FNU
SAVOSTYANOV (JORDAN).

2. QUERIED BY ITALIAN WHETHER BREZHNEV HAD
SUGGESTED TO ARAFAT THAT PLO STAY OUT OF FIRST

STAGE, THEN JOIN SECOND STAGE OF GENEVA CONFERENCE, SEVOSTYANOV SAID HE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER BREZHNEV HIMSELF HAD MADE SUCH SUGGESTION BUT, AT WORKING LEVEL, SOVIET SIDE AHD HAD QUERIED ARAFAT ABOUT HIS POSSIBILITY. WHILE NOT COMPLETELY EXCLUDING THIS OPTION, ARAFAT CHARACTERIZED IT AS "NOT FAVORABLE" AND CONVEYED DISTINCT RELUCTANCE TO PURSUE THIS AVENUE. SEVOSTYANOV SAID ARAFAT INSISTED THAT PLO DELEGATION BE INDEPENDENT AND ON A PAR WITH OTHER ARAB DELEGATIONS. SOVIETS REPLIED THAT THIS WAS UP TO PALESTINIANS AND OTHER ARABS TO DECIDE. ARAFAT WAS VAGUE ON ACCEPTABLE FORMULA FOR INVITATION TO GENEVA BUT ADAMANT THAT PLO WOULD NOT ACCEPT TERMS OF REFERENCE WHICH INCLUDED RESOLUTION 242.

3. SEVOSTYANOV SAID GEOGRAPHIC MAKEUP OF FUTURE PALESTINIAN STATE WAS DISCUSSED BRIEFLY. ARAFAT DID NOT COMMIT HIMSELF BEYOND ASSERTING THAT IT SHOULD BE FORMED ON "NATIVE" PALESTINE SOIL. HE WAS QUITE NEGATIVE ON ASSOCIATION WITH JORDAN ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT EXCLUDE COMPLETELY A DECISION ON THIS MATTER AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PALESTINIAN STATE.

4. ARAFAT REPORTEDLY TOLD SOVIETS RECENT PALESTINE NATIONAL COUNCIL (PNC) MEETING HAD STRENGTHENED THE UNITY OF PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT AND PARTICULARLY THE INFLUENCE OF THE "MODERATE,REALISTIC" FACTION. IN CONFIDENTIAL

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THIS REGARD HE DREW ATTENTION TO PNC RESOLUTION CONFIRMING THE POSSIBILITY OF CONTACTS WITH "DEMOCRATIC AND PROGRESSIVE JEWISH FORCES" IN ISRAEL. HE ASLO SAID PLO-SYRIAN RELATIONS WERE IMPROVING. FINALLY HE GAVE A "100 PERCENT" ENDORSEMENT OF BREZHNEV REMARKS ON ME IN MARCH 21 TUC SPEECH. SEVOSTYANOV SAID SOVIET IMPRESSION IS THAT PLO IS MOVING TOWARD FLEXIBILITY, ARAFAT IS IN COMMAND AND HIS PRESTIGE AND AUTHORITY WITHIN THE PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT HAS REACHED NEW HIGH.

5. ON APRIL 15 EMBOFF CALLED ON MFA N.E. COUNTIRIES DEPT FIRST SECRETARY IGOR' G. IVASHCHENKO (ISRAEL, JORDAN AND PALESTINIANS) AND ROBERT SHAKIROVICH TURDIYEV (EGYPT-BUT MOR IMPORTANT, MFA INTERPRETER DURING ARAFAT VISIT). WHILE SOVIETS DID NOT DENY GIST OF REMARKS REPORTED AVOVE AND ALSO AS REPORTED FROM ARAB SOURCES (REFTEL) NEIGHER DID THEY CONFIRM THEM. ON KEY ISSUE OF REPORTED SOVIET

COUNSEL TO PALESTINIANS TO COME IN AT SECOND STAGE OF TWO STAGE GENEVA CONFERENCE, THEY SAID ONLY THAT THIS WAS ONE POSSIBILITY FOR A WAY OUT OF PRESENT IMPASSE. THEY INDICATED, HOWEVER, THAT PALESTINIANS WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO ACCEPT A SIMPLE SOVIET "GUARANTEE" OF PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION AT SECOND STAGE WITHOUT SOME SORT OF PRIOR UNDERSTANDING FROM THE U.S. AND ISRAELI SIDE THAT THIS WOULD TAKE PLACE. THEY REPEATED THAT THE PALESTINIAN POSITION WAS STILL ONE OF FAVORING A SEPARATE, EQUAL DELEGATION FROM THE VERY BEGINNING AND THEY ALSO REPEATED THE STANDARD SOVIET PRIVATE POSITION THAT THE ACTUAL FORM OF THE PARTICIPATION COULD BE DECIDED BY THE ARABS AND THE PALESTINIANS. OTHER THAN IN THE VERBAL FENCING REPORTED ABOVE, THEY WERE CAREFUL NOT TO COMMIT THEMSELVES TO A STATEMENT OF THE SOVIET POSITION ON PARTICIPATION FROM THE VERY BEGINNING.

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6. ASKED IF ARAFAT HAD EMPHASIZED THE MODERATE POSITION REPRESENTED BY THE PNC'S POLITICAL DECLARATION ON RELATIONS WITH PROGRESSIVE JEWISH ELEMENTS (AS IN PARA 4 ABOVE), IVASHCHENKO SAID THAT SUCH "PETTY" MATTERS HAD NOT BEEN DISCUSSED IN DETAIL ALTHOUGH ARAFAT HAD DISCUSSED THE GENERAL TREND TOWARD MODERATION REPRESENTED BY THE RESULTS OF THE PNC.

7. ASKED TO COMMENT ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ABSENCE OF A JOINT STATEMENT ON THE CONCLUSION OF THE ARAFAT VISIT, IVASHCHENKO SAID THAT IT WAS FELT THAT THE COMMUNIQUE-LIKE STATEMENT AFTER THE MEETING WITH BREZHNEV WOULD SUFFICE. TURDIYEV ADDED THAT IT WAS NATURAL THAT THE TWO SIDES WOULD HESITATE TO PUT THE DETAILS OF THEIR POSITIONS DOWN IN WRITING AT A TIME OF SERIOUS DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY RELATED TO THE RECONVENING OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE.

8. THE SOVIETS REFUSED TO BE DRAWN OUT ON THE ISSUE OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES OF A FUTURE PALESTINIAN STATE EXCEPT FOR TURDIYEV'S VOLUNTEERING THAT THIS WAS NOT DISCUSSED DURING ARAFAT'S CALL ON BREZHNEV.

9. COMMENT: WHILE THERE IS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT SOVIET DID PUSH PALESTINIANS ON POSSIBILITY OF JOINING GENEVA ONLY AT SECOND STAGE, WE DO NOT YET KNOW HOW HARD THEY PUSHED OR IF THIS IDEA WAS SIMPLY PRESENTED AS ONE POSSIBLE WAY OUT OF GENEVA DEADLOCK. AT ANY RATE SOVIETS STILL INSIST

THAT PALESTINIANS HAVE TO BE REPRESENTED IN SOME
WAY AT GENEVA AND WE HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE
THERE IS ANY GIVE IN THAT BASIC POSITION.
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